

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT &amp; VOTING INFORMATION IN CLASSROOM STUDIES

# CALIFORNIA CIVICS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR AND BY CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



**W**elcome to the first edition of the California CIVICS newsletter. CIVICS is a new program developed because young adults are not voting in proportion to their numbers in the general population. That means your ideas aren't being stated as loudly as they should be. This newsletter is only one component of the CIVICS program, but I think it is one of the most important because it allows me to address your concerns and issues.

During the past year I have visited with California high school students throughout the state to learn about their views on a variety of issues. From those discussions I have realized that decision-makers must consult young adults on issues that affect their lives. The direction and design of this program is a result of the feedback and ideas that I received from students throughout California. I want these newsletters to represent your views and interests. To do that, you must communicate with me so I can make sure that issues important to you are being addressed. You can e-mail me at [CIVICS@ss.ca.gov](mailto:CIVICS@ss.ca.gov), or

write to me C/O California CIVICS, 1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814. I hope that you will find this and future editions of the newsletter informative and interesting. If you have suggestions on ways to improve the newsletter itself, tell me about those, too. I would like to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Secretary of State Bill Jones

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# Speak Up

Let us know what you think!

**THIS IS YOUR CHANCE** to voice your concerns about the government and political issues that are important to *you*. Or let us know what you are doing to become involved in your community. Your questions, comments or concerns may be sent to Secretary of State, c/o California CIVICS, 1500 11th Street, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814, or by e-mail at CIVICS@ss.ca.gov.

## DEAR EDITOR:

### Who can register to vote in California?

In order to register to vote, a person must:

- Be a citizen of the United States;
- Be a resident of California;
- Be at least 18 years of age as of the day of the next election;
- Not be in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony; and
- Not be deemed by an appropriate court to be mentally incompetent.

## DEAR EDITOR:

### What is an Open Primary?

In 1996, the voters of California adopted Proposition 198, which instituted an open primary system. Before that you could only vote for the candidates for the political party in which you were registered to vote. In other words, if you were a Republican, you could only choose among Republican candidates for president, and if you were a registered Democrat, you could only choose a Democratic candidate. People not affiliated with a political party could not vote for candidates in primary elections.

In an "open" primary, all candidates from all parties appear on one ballot so you may vote for whomever you choose regardless of your party affiliation. However, even though you may select any political candidate, the national parties have rules that they will consider only votes cast by their registered members when selecting the presidential nominee who will represent their party in the general election.

In fact, both major political parties and a majority of the minor parties have filed a lawsuit against Secretary of State Bill Jones seeking to overturn the open primary. Secretary Jones will attend the U.S. Supreme Court hearing on April 24. We'll keep you posted.

# Make a Difference

**WHILE YOU ARE IN SCHOOL**, many of the things that happen at school — classes that are taught, dress codes, spending decisions — are determined by the school board. Yet school board meetings in most communities are sparsely attended. You, as a student, have an insight into these issues that's invaluable. As a voter (or future voter), you have the power to influence the decisions of the board by influencing who is elected, or by running for office yourself.

Park district boards are also generally ignored. Yet these officials control what kind of athletic fields and recreational activities your community will have, what state of repair will be maintained and whether new activities, such as skateboard

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has.*

parks, will be supported. Few people follow the activities of these boards yet they control large amounts of money and affect the quality of life in your community.

City councils have the power to make rules that affect your daily life, from whether coffee shops can have tables on the sidewalk to anti-loitering laws, from new taxes to development that can change the shopping, traffic and kind of housing in your community.

Speaking up at public meetings, organizing or joining grass-roots organizations that support or

oppose a cause you believe in and voting for people who support your views are ways you can have a powerful and lasting influence on your community.

Involved local voters have prevented or allowed sex education in high schools, barred or encouraged specific types of development in cities, prevented teenagers from gathering or provided centers where they can gather.

Think about events that have taken place in your own community. Have classes been cut because of budget problems? Are buildings in need of repair? Can you get to where you want to go without driving? When was the last time a new park or sports field was opened up?

*—margaret mead*

Do you know who decides these things? Have you written these people or spoken up at a meeting? In Auburn, a city in northern California, a group of skateboarders got tired of having no place to practice their sport without being stopped by police. So a large group of them came and spoke at a city council meeting. And guess what—the council members supported them and got the funding to build a skateboard park.

It all depends on who speaks up and who votes. Make your voice heard!

continued on Back...



**Call for Entries!!!**

## 2000 Logo Contest

### THE PRIZES

The first place winner's logo will be published on the back cover of the November 2000 California Voter Information Guide, which is mailed to more than 12 million households in the state. Logos also may be used in the Golden State Museum's voting display.

Honorable Mention winners will receive certificates.

All entries will be publicly displayed in the Secretary of State's main office in Sacramento. The winners will be publicly acknowledged.

### THE THEME

Participation in democracy (including, of course, voting). The winning logo will be used throughout California to encourage voter participation and interest.

### THE RULES

You can enter the contest if you are a high school student (grades 9-12) in California. Entries must be received by the Secretary of State no later than May 31, 2000.

You may submit more than one entry, but each entry must be submitted separately and must be accompanied by an official entry form.

All submissions must be completely original artwork. No copies or reproductions will be accepted.

Your design should be no more than four colors, including white. Entries must be on paper no smaller than 8.5" X 11" and no larger than 17" X 24" (you do not need to fill the entire page). The finished design should be mounted on poster board or another sturdy surface.

Entries must be packaged and mailed flat. Please do not fold your artwork.

### THE JUDGING

Entries will be judged on the following criteria:

- ◆ does the entry inspire participation in the democratic process and voting?
- ◆ is the message simple yet powerful?
- ◆ can the design be adapted to a variety of uses (flyers, pamphlets, posters, billboards, t-shirts, etc.)
- ◆ is the entry carefully and professionally done?
- ◆ will the logo catch someone's attention and interest immediately?

# Make a Difference ...continued

At the local, state and federal level, new laws and even new political parties are created by groups of voters getting together and lobbying for what they want.

In California voter action changed the method of property taxation with Proposition 13, eliminated bilingual education, protected the coastline, and reformed automobile insurance pricing.

An active voter is a powerful thing.

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Vote. Get informed. Get involved. You have the power to make a difference. Just get out and use it.

To learn more about politics, your community and how to get involved, read the paper, listen to the radio, contact local community groups, surf the net. Here a just a few web sites to help you start.

## MEDIA

AJR newslink: [www.newslink.org](http://www.newslink.org)

## VOTING AND DEMOCRACY

Rock the Vote: [www.rockthevote.org](http://www.rockthevote.org)

Project Vote Smart: [www.vote-smart.org/yip/](http://www.vote-smart.org/yip/)

Grassroots.com: [www.grassroots.com](http://www.grassroots.com)

The Center for Voting and Democracy:  
[www.igc.org/cvd/](http://www.igc.org/cvd/)

The Democracy Network: [www.dnet.org](http://www.dnet.org)

Kids Voting USA: [www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)

Secretary of State: [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

# Just for Fun

RDCSSISNRTZAAEKNBUSPOOXWGVGELWQW  
DEAWROAMPPEOWDRJSFLOQRMREBVOTILRE  
ILLUFEPVAPPPEREGISTRARDGJIOMAPGIR  
EPIISLVAPMRVWLMEBAWPKRPRECINCTGO  
ACRVGIOFOAEAIEVCOIDOLMTFVOTINFBJ  
ZJSCPIRFMRCVNGSRPSEOPTOGLRBBOMJY  
PKUCRGBILAPLCIWERPPLOSPRIMAZBATU  
PPVMECELLTTOEABSRILOLLMOUYALBPPYL  
ALONBAGDEYECAFAATAALILTLREBLERBDO  
YPTICVAAIALTNPFARDQHPRLTMSOREPIE  
OORPACEVNVLN PQHIAEVOSBIYEETPTKTL  
TLELNRIIGREIRZTRDMIWRENBNVWHBNA  
ULLICNSRPPIGIREYBAPTTEGPOTHICYOV  
VOIDOMICILETMAVOOIVGOTPLBEMPIPRO  
MOGUWCANLVNOABMVSL OIVVLEVEVTHWVE  
VKTYSETRARIDRESMINDPTTAOWVEHNJPO  
CUEQD VRECI VOYVBFERI OEGCVLOIRCPVV  
FWSWDAAGRIGRRRJANESLROATETFETJOB  
ESADPSRSEMPELDPSOBTLT TIAIITPOTTA  
KTVFORESIDENCYDET VOTRMKNMNRHRDB  
QWNGLSOTEAOODMETOAVPEETTEGWEEHOR  
GQATDN O OIRLBMMETEIOMLDISTRICTTAE  
TFCXOOMFLPVFPBIAEATLKMH TTHHWGTRA  
ERECMRFP IYEW R NGTVLP AZOT OHPEAOVIM  
VERMRTVOGRCQGMREACACI VKRPTAPDSWE  
VOMOCAIMTDIRCSBROHBRGBHOOIDL TUDT  
VPLPLROOIEEOIRLCTDSAEMTSLRTNRFOD  
NDILOIVLOLIVVBLAOEALPOSATRH TAFMU  
GFGKEAELEBEESTDVLIRBKRTKLUNVIRRLT  
AGBP CZTREGISTRATI ONTETTRDEAYTADI  
RWLOLREILAVMGAYIVBARCMREITOMOGRL  
EEELVERAERAOLLOMNREWAHEV RTAATEOI

AFFIDAVIT	ELIGIBLE	SUFFRAGE	REGISTRAR
BALLOT	PRIMARY	VOTING	RESIDENCY
CANVASS	PRECINCT	DOMICILE	ABSENTEE VOTING
DISTRICT	REGISTRATION	POLLING PLACE	

# ENTRYFORM

attach completed form to your artwork and mail to:

Logo Design Contest  
Secretary of State's Office, Elections Division  
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

NAME	
HOME ADDRESS	
CITY	ZIP
SCHOOL	GRADE
TEACHER'S NAME	PHONE